



SquashSmarts, Inc.
DEI Consulting Engagement
Request for Proposal
January 15, 2021



The following was prepared by SquashSmarts in consultation with Catalyst: Ed



Draft Project Scope: DEI Assessment
Prepared By: Squashsmarts & Catalyst:Ed
Summary: Nonprofit Seeks Independent Consultant Highly Skilled in Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Assessment & Planning.

The Need

SquashSmarts seeks an experienced Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) practitioner to work closely with the organization's newly formed DEI Committee to assess, guide and serve as a resource in all areas of the organization's culture, including administration, programs and partnerships.

The Client

Founded in 2001, SquashSmarts is a free intensive out-of-school time program for Philadelphia's public school students grades 5-12. SquashSmarts is a 501c3 non-profit academic and athletic mentoring program with a proven track record of keeping students in school, in shape, and on track for graduation. To learn more click www.squashsmarts.org

Project Context

SquashSmarts serves 150 middle and high school students and 90 graduates annually with 14 full-time and 4 part-time staff and 24 Board of Directors. Student demographics are as follows: 58% Black, 28% Latinx, 12% self-identify as two more races, 1% white, and 1% Asian. SquashSmarts has a growing portion of staff (60% of program staff) who are alumni graduates of the SquashSmarts program, and additional SquashSmarts staff members are native to Philadelphia and have attended the Philadelphia Public Schools, and reflect the students and communities served through several intersecting identities.

The Board of Directors, guided by the Governance & Nominating Committee, has been working to diversify for several years focusing specifically on improving the Board's racial, gender, age and skill set diversity. The Board is actively working on this goal, adding four new Directors and five new Committee members since the start of Covid-19.

DEI Journey

After nationwide calls for racial justice and a new resolve in fighting systemic racism, the SquashSmarts Executive Director (Stephen Gregg) and Board of Directors have recognized the need to form a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee for the organization. The Executive Director and staff nominated one Development Staff and one Program Staff to lead the DEI Committee work. Director of Development (Debby Dowlin) and Director of Squash & Fitness (Tempest Bowden), who is a 2008 program alumna, and Executive Director (Stephen Gregg) hold weekly discussions about DEI and the Committee's work including a look at SquashSmarts' past, present, and future to determine what the organization is already doing and what more the organization will need to do to become more diverse, inclusive, equitable and responsive to their students, families, staff. Organizational staff and several Board members have, to date, participated in informational workshops and seminars facilitated by external industry leaders.

On-going DEI Committee projects/accomplishments to date include: (1) soliciting, interviewing and finalizing two new permanent Director positions established by the Board in June for one current SquashSmarts parent and one SquashSmarts alumna/us (both hold 3-year terms and equal status as Directors) both of who have now been identified, interviewed and appointed to the Board; (2) creating the DEI Committee roster which now consists of three staff (Bowden, Dowlin, Gregg), one parent (Darryl Johnson), two alumni (Mithun Das, Jordan Williams) a professional squash player (Olivia Fiechter), an entrepreneur and young friend (Theresa Shropshire) and long-time SquashSmarts Board and Executive Committee member (Molly Pierce). The full DEI Committee has met twice (12/17/20 and 1/14/21) and is currently focused on the search for a DEI Consultant, as well as establishing a formal charter.

The Project

SquashSmarts is looking to initially create internal and external feedback loops with stakeholders as well as an on-going system/structure that will allow the organization to self-examine its administrative and programmatic practices, partners, policies, and processes.

DEI Assessment

SquashSmarts would like to survey key organizational stakeholders, including staff, board members, students, alumni, families, volunteers and donors. The organization would like to gather feedback on data blind spots and gaps within the organization. Expected practices will draw upon the DEI consultant's expertise and suggested tools and resources but may include: traditional SWOT analysis, small focus-group conversations, team training sessions, education resources, peer group learning, policy/practice review, stress-tests through real-world scenarios, etc. SquashSmarts would like staff to lead in administering the survey assessment while the consultant would assist with data collection and post-assessment evaluation. SquashSmarts would like to ensure a qualitative element of the assessment process where the consultant would conduct focus groups with a number of key stakeholder groups which may include alumni, students, and staff. Final deliverables should be able to be managed and implemented by the organization's staff and stakeholders on an on-going basis.

Key Questions

- How does SquashSmarts Leadership reflect and engage with its Student Audience in a culturally responsive and meaningful way?
- What are strengths, weaknesses and areas of improvement in SquashSmarts staff culture?
- How does SquashSmarts develop a curriculum that meaningfully incorporates DEI?
- How does SquashSmarts prepare students to enter, navigate and interact with the external partners, including the largely affluent and ethnically homogenous squash community?
- What are pros/cons of the Board's current financial commitment vis a vis the financial health of the organization and the ability to engage a diverse set of Directors?

Key Tasks

- Gain organizational context through in person pre-conversations with staff leading DEI Committee to review relevant organizational history, policies and practices;
- Work with DEI Committee to identify relevant stakeholders and design/adapt survey tools to fit the organization's needs/context;

- Provide training as needed for administering surveys to their stakeholder community, and best practices for compiling data;
- Conduct focus groups with SquashSmarts stakeholders which may include alumni, students, staff, donors, and volunteers;
- Collaborate with DEI Committee to analyze and understand survey and focus group data results and its implications on students;
- Generate synthesized results based on the findings of the survey and focus group discussions.

Deliverables

- Support SquashSmarts in crafting a DEI short and long-range plan;
- Support SquashSmarts staff in surveying key stakeholders;
- Support SquashSmarts in synthesizing DEI assessment findings.

Qualifications

- Strong experience in DEI work applicable to non-profits service youth;
- Strong experience in survey creation and qualitative/quantitative data analysis;
- Experience managing and building consensus among a diverse team;
- Personal style that incorporate the Socratic method;
- Small firms/individuals/team representing the student population preferred;
- Proficiency in Spanish preferred.

Location

- This engagement can be run remotely.

Budget

- \$5,000-\$20,000 commensurate with the consultant's suggested scope and deliverables.

Project timeline and key dates

- Proposals accepted on a rolling basis in January/February 2021
- Interviews: February 2021
- Project start date: March 2021
- Project end date: per consultant's suggested scope and deliverables

Next steps: If you're interested in this opportunity, please submit the following

- A proposal document (1-2 pages) encapsulating the following:
 - A brief description of how you would approach this project
 - A brief description of your qualifications to do this project
 - A brief work plan, including potential timeline and deliverables
- Budget:
 - Hourly rate
 - Estimated number of hours to complete the work
 - Estimated budget
- Team resumes: Please consolidate all resumes into one file and upload
- The name, title, email, phone number of up to three (3) references who can speak to your experience and expertise in the project area (optional for CE network members since we already have these on file for you)
- Optional: Relevant work samples

Submissions: Email proposals and supporting materials to info@squashsmarts.org

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